

Remarks

The Examiner is thanked for the early indication of allowable subject matter in claims 6, 7, 22, and 23.

The Examiner is thanked for his time during a person interview with Linda A. Horner and Jason D. Eisenberg on March 2, 2006. Applicants agree with the substance of the interview as described in the Interview Summary issued at the interview.

Claims 8, 10, 22, 24, 26, 31, 36, 46, 53, 60, and 67 are sought to be cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer. Applicants reserve the right to prosecute similar or broader claims in a continuation application. Claims 1, 11, 12, 17, 23, 28, 33, 40, 43, 50, 57, and 64 are sought to be amended. Upon entering this amendment, claims 1-7, 9, 11-23, 25, 27-30, 32-35, 37-45, 47-52, 54-50, 61-66, and 68-70 are pending in the present application, with claims 1, 17, 33, 40, 43, 50, 57, and 64 being the independent claims.

No new matter has been introduced by any amendments.

Reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested.

Based on the above amendments and following remarks, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider all outstanding rejections and that they be withdrawn.

Drawings

Formal drawings are being submitted herewith.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph

The Examiner rejected claims 10, 12, 26, 53, and 67 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph.

In regards to claims 10, 26, 53, and 67, the Examiner stated that the tip surrounding piece was being compared to itself. Applicants assume similarly worded claims 36, 46, and 60 were meant to be part of this rejection. Applicants have cancelled these claims for other reasons and to expedite prosecution. Accordingly, Applicants believe this rejection has been rendered moot.

In regards to claim 12, the Examiner stated the term “said heater” lacks antecedence. Applicants assume claim 28, which is similar in scope, was meant to be part of this rejection. Based on the amendments above, which comply with the Examiner’s suggestions, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw these rejections.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §§ 102(b) and 103(a)

Claims 1, 2, 4, 5, 8-18, 20, 21, 24-34, 36-40, 42-44, 46-51, 53-58, 60-65, and 67-70 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by JP Publication no. 06-143,358 to Kunio (“Kunio”). Claims 3, 19, 41, 45, 52, 59, and 66 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Kunio in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,980,237 to Swenson et al. (“Swenson”). Applicant assumes claim 35, which is similar in scope to claims 3 and 19, was meant to be rejected for the same reasons claims 3 and 19 were allegedly unpatentable. Applicants traverse these rejections.

In regards to claims 10, 26, 31, 36, 46, 53, 60, and 67, although Applicants disagree with the Examiner’s rejection of these claims over the applied reference, these claims were cancelled for other reasons and to expedite prosecution. Accordingly, Applicants believe the art rejection of these claims has been rendered moot.

Independent Claim 1

Claim 1 now recites at least “an alignment piece positioned between said tip and said tip surrounding piece and free from contact with said nozzle body, and wherein said tip contacts said alignment piece to align said tip with respect to said alignment piece.”

Kunio (based on a mechanical translation from the JPO website, submitted herewith) teaches a ceramic member 30 located in a gap 20 that contacts nozzle body 6, tip 10, and tip surrounding piece 11. In contrast, claim 1 now recites at least an alignment piece ...free from contact with said nozzle body. Thus, Kunio fails to teach of this feature. Swenson does not cure the deficiencies of Kunio.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw the rejection of claim 1. Also, at least based on their dependency to claim 1, claims 2-7, 9, and 11-16 should be found allowable over the applied references.

Independent Claim 17

Claim 17 now recites at least:

wherein said nozzle body includes a first threaded portion and defines a nozzle body melt passage, and said nozzle body melt passage is in fluid communication with and downstream from one of said at least one runner,

wherein said tip includes a second threaded portion and is removably connected to said nozzle body through mating of the first and second threaded portions of the nozzle body and the tip, wherein said tip defines a tip melt passage, said tip melt passage is downstream from and in fluid communication with said nozzle body melt passage, and is upstream from and in fluid communication with said gate.

The amendments to claim 17 include subject matter substantially the same as the allowable subject matter found in now cancelled claim 22. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw the rejection of claim 17. Also, at least based on their dependency to claim 17, claims 18-21, 23, 25, 27-30, and 32 should be found allowable over the applied references.

Independent Claim 33

Claim 33 now recites at least “an alignment piece positioned between said tip and said tip surrounding piece, the alignment piece having non-parallel inner and outer surfaces.”

The Examiner asserts Kunio teaches using element 30 as an alignment piece between tip 10 and tip surrounding piece 11. Element 30 has a rectangular cross-section and parallel inner and outer surfaces, as seen in Figure 2 of Kunio. In contrast, claim 33

now recites at least “an alignment piece positioned between said tip and said tip surrounding piece, the alignment piece having non-parallel inner and outer surfaces.” Thus, Kunio fails to teach of this feature. Swenson does not cure the deficiencies of Kunio.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw the rejection of claim 33. Also, at least based on their dependency to claim 33, claims 34-35 and 37-39 should be found allowable over the applied references.

Independent Claims 40, 43, and 50

Claims 40, 43, and 50 now recite at least “an alignment piece having upper and lower ends, the lower end being located upstream from a gate.”

Kunio teaches ceramic piece 30 that extends along an entire length of tip 10 and contacts a gate 11a. In contrast, claims 40, 43, and 50 now recite at least “an alignment piece having upper and lower ends, the lower end being located upstream from a gate.” Thus, Kunio fails to teach of this feature. Swenson does not cure the deficiencies of Kunio.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw the rejection of claims 40, 43, and 50. Also, at least based on their respective dependencies to claims 40, 43, and 50 claims 41-42, 44-45, 47-49, 51-52, and 54-56 should be found allowable over the applied references.

Independent Claim 57

Claim 57 now recites at least:

a nozzle body having a threaded portion, wherein said nozzle body defines a nozzle body melt passage, said nozzle body melt passage is adapted to be in fluid communication with and downstream from said at least one runner;

a tip including a threaded portion that is removably connected with respect to said nozzle body through mating

of the threaded portions of the nozzle body and the tip, wherein said tip defines a tip melt passage, said tip melt passage is downstream from and in fluid communication with said nozzle body melt passage, and said tip melt passage is adapted to be upstream from and in fluid communication with said gate

The amendments to claim 57 include subject matter substantially the same as the allowable subject matter found in claims 6 and 22. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw the rejection of claim 57. Also, at least based on their dependency to claim 57, claims 58-59 and 61-63 should be found allowable over the applied references.

Independent Claim 64

Claim 64 now recites at least:

wherein said nozzle body includes a threaded portion and defines a nozzle body melt passage, and said nozzle body melt passage is in fluid communication with and downstream from one of said at least one runner,

wherein said tip is removably connected to said nozzle body,

wherein said tip defines a tip melt passage, said tip melt passage is downstream from and in fluid communication with said nozzle body melt passage, and is upstream from and in fluid communication with said gate,

wherein said tip surrounding piece includes a threaded portion and is removably connected with respect to said nozzle body through mating of the threaded portions of the nozzle body and the tip surrounding piece, the tip surrounding piece is adapted to contact the mold block in the nozzle well to align the tip surrounding piece with respect to the nozzle well... .

The amendments to claim 64 include subject matter substantially the same as the allowable subject matter found in claims 7 and 23. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw the rejection of claim 64. Also, at

least based on their dependency to claim 64, claims 65-66 and 68-70 should be found allowable over the applied references.

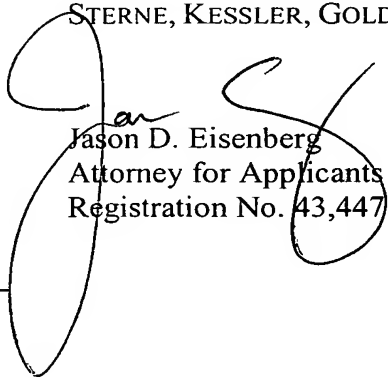
Conclusion

All of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicants therefore respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider all presently outstanding rejections and that they be withdrawn. Applicants believe that a full and complete reply has been made to the outstanding Office Action and, as such, the present application is in condition for allowance. If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number provided.

Prompt and favorable consideration of this Amendment and Reply is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date: 3/7/06

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